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ABSTRACT

The Student Consultant Project (SCP) at the University of Pittsburgh is designed to bring technical assistance from the university to ghetto community businessmen. SCP represents a working model of student involvement with social action, an ongoing effort within the community emphasizing cooperation between the university and 1 of its constituencies. Since its inception in October of 1969, the project has won considerable support from community organizations, students, and university administrators. As an example of university-urban interaction, the program attracted the attention of the University Urban Interface Program as a candidate for study under the Minority and Urban Services priority. Because it was operational and provided ongoing services to the community, the opportunity to document its achievements, to help systematize its procedures, and to raise issues pertinent to future plans warranted its inclusion in the Operation Outreach Studies of UUIP. Accordingly, 3 tasks reported on here were agreed to for study: (1) an historical overview of the SCP; (2) a manual of procedures for the consultant; and (3) a report on problem areas within the areas of communication, control, information flow, and analysis. (Author/HS)

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THE STUDENT CONSULTANT PROJECT (SCP):
A CASE STUDY OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIAL ACTION

SEPTEMBER, 1971

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UNIVERSITY-URBAN INTERFACE PROGRAM

CONTRACT NO. OEG-2-9-480725-1027
PROJECT NO. 80725

SUBMITTED TO THE
BUREAU OF RESEARCH U.S.O.E.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
SEPTEMBER, 1971

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UNIVERSITY-URBAN INTERFACE PROGRAM

THE STUDENT CONSULTANT PROJECT (SCP):
A CASE STUDY OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIAL ACTION

SEPTEMBER, 1971

Albert C. Van Dusen, Ph.D.
Secretary of the University (Vice Chancellor)
Principal Investigator

Robert C. Brictson, Ph.D.
Director of Research Programs

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Without the energies, expertise, and cooperation of University of Pittsburgh students, members of community businesses, and the faculty of the Graduate School of Business Administration, the Student Consultant Project itself might never have become a successful reality. Because of the Project's recognition and its import for other institutions, organizations, and businesses interested in such efforts, this document briefly documents, analyzes, and discusses the program.

Original discussions with Dr. Robert Perloff, Professor of Business Administration and Psychology and Director of the Management Research Center of the Graduate School of Business, led to formulation of a proposal that facilitated the University-Urban Interface Program sponsorship of this monograph. The completion of this report is particularly attributable to direction and authorship of Dr. Michael S. Koleda of the Graduate School of Business, William Tiga Tita, founder of the Project and Graduate School of Business student, and David H. Freedman of the Graduate School for Public and International Affairs who recently completed his dissertation on the institutional capability of providing technical assistance to black businessmen.

Five other students who contributed to the Project were: Joe O. Anyigbo, Clarence F. Curry, David C. D'Souza, Wilbur Hines, and Felix O. Sakyiama. Finally, Christina Jarema, Research Assistant in the University-Urban Interface Program, served as principal liaison for the Project. Through their collective efforts, this report was produced and disseminated.

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INTRODUCTION

The Student Consultant Project (SCP) is designed to bring technical assistance from the University to ghetto community businessmen. SCP represents a working model of student involvement with social action, an ongoing effort within the community emphasizing cooperation between the University and one of its constituencies. Since its inception in October of 1969, the Project has won considerable support from community organizations, students, and University administrators. Similarly, it has raised hopes for even more cooperation and success.

As an example of University-urban interaction, the program attracted the attention of the University-Urban Interface Program as a candidate for study under the Minority and Urban Services priority. Because it was operational and provided ongoing services to the community, the opportunity to document its achievements, to help systematize its procedures, and to raise issues pertinent to future plans warranted its inclusion in the Operation Outreach Studies of UUIP. Accordingly, three tasks reported upon here were concurred upon for study: Task One--Historical Overview of the Student Consultant Project, Task Two--A Manual of Procedures for the Consultant, Task Three--Communication, Control, Information Flow, and Analysis: A Report on Problem Areas.

Hopefully, this chronicle and analysis will lead to improvements in the Project, greater viability, and a guideline to others who are interested in such efforts within an institution-building context.

PROJECT REPORT

Contract No. OEG-2-9-480725-1027

Project No. 80725

Operation Outreach - Graduate School of Business

Student Consultant Project

Task I

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDENT CONSULTANT PROJECT

TO: Dr. Robert C. Brictson
Director of Research Programs
University of Pittsburgh

FROM: Dr. Michael S. Koleda
Graduate School of Business
University of Pittsburgh

APRIL 1971

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> The Student Consultant Project comprises persons who believe that members of a great University must interact with their immediate environment for mutual understanding, co-operation, and tangible benefit. For the student, the benefits include first-hand knowledge of the forces within his residential environment; contact with the people who reside within the ghetto areas, and an awareness of their problems, ideas, and personalities; and an opportunity to use newly-acquired knowledge to improve the economic and social conditions of the community. In return the community receives whatever assistance can be provided, and it is less apt to regard the university as an unconcerned sector in its midst.*

I. INTRODUCTION

For nearly two years now, since October, 1969, graduate business students from the University of Pittsburgh have been going out into the Black business community to act as management consultants to minority group businessmen. The students who are both black and white, their clients, who are almost exclusively black, and a group of faculty and business consultants are joined in a unique, client-oriented organization known as the Student Consultant Project.

The goals of the organization range from the general (opening another channel of communication and co-operation between blacks and whites, and university and non-university persons) to the specific (the strengthening of individual businesses so as to develop a black economic base in Pittsburgh). However, there are four goals that merit attention:

1. To help create black economic power in Pittsburgh by strengthening client businesses or organizations, by creating additional jobs, and by raising managerial skill levels and pride of our clients.

2. To focus the attention of the Business School faculty upon pressing problems facing the Pittsburgh black business community.

3. To open up a channel of communication between the business students and black businessmen; this may prove to be a major value of the project as the students and their black clients are thrown together often in confronting major problems.

4. To provide students with practical field experience working with businesses during the school year.

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* Tita, William T., A Brief Overview of SCP: From Its Inception to Date, November 30, 1970, p. 1 (a special mimeographed report to the members of SCP and community businessmen).

In order to achieve these goals, the project has been involved in several activities such as:

a. Provision of consulting services for managers of small businesses or community organizations.

b. Sponsorship of programs to disseminate knowledge of relevant managerial techniques and problems to the client community.

c. Referral services where specialized professional competence is required.

d. Dissemination of information to clients on how to obtain goods and services available through governmental agencies or other sources.

e. Provision of information on business opportunities in general.

While no program should credit itself for the success of small black businessmen who are realizing their ambitions through natural intelligence and hard work, our student consultants have made some rather significant contributions to some of our fifty or more clients to date. However, the program is successful to the extent that there is sustained contact between students and clients, and a mutual willingness to work towards common goals.

II. RAISON D'ETRE

There can be little doubt that black businessmen will continue to require assistance far beyond the capacity of all present organizations combined. At the same time it seems that SCP is unique in its capacity to serve the community for the following reasons:

1. Student consultants provide a much needed service as a communication link that puts the businessman in touch with specialized services of which he may be unaware, or which he does not know how to use effectively.

2. Student consultants provide on-site consulting services for a wide range of problems, and have ready access to university faculty experts and interested business consultants on problems falling beyond their capabilities.

3. Student consultants, unlike professionals, do not occupy an elevated social status. Consequently, the client tends to feel at ease with the student, communication is facilitated, and a comfortable working relationship is readily established.

4. Most important, our consultants are future professionals who will have been exposed to the real problems of black businessmen, and as a result will be better prepared to develop new and ingenious solutions to these problems.

Perhaps the most important, and easily the most dramatic, lesson for the student consultants concerns the reasons for and the depth of the black businessman's frustrations. These frustrations are many. A client who runs a grocery store provides an illustration: The client has been running his store for more than twenty years and understands the business inside and out. His consultant pointed out something he already knew. He needed a bookkeeping system to facilitate the management of his business affairs, and a modern cash register. He had discussed this with the consultant and both had agreed on the purchase of a new cash register and installation of a bookkeeping system, but twice in one week, he had been robbed. He has no insurance and cannot obtain any. His consultant became so frustrated about the situation that the client had to cool him down. The client said, "Look, friend, the society has made them thieves and I have learned to suffer both ways--from robbery and lack of insurance."

III. HOW IT BEGAN

The University of Pittsburgh realized that its relations with the black community left much to be desired.

The University as a whole and its various schools have initiated programs to correct the situation. As part of this greater involvement, the Chancellor and deans of various departments met with leaders of Neighborhood Centers Association during the fall of 1968. Subsequent to this meeting, the Dean of the Graduate School of Business, Dr. H. Jerome Zoffer, had several meetings with the Directors of Neighborhood Centers Association regarding ways in which the Graduate School of Business might work with the Association to benefit the

community. A general consensus that emerged from these meetings was to involve teams of M.B.A. students, guided by faculty members, in preliminary research studies on specific community problems. This approach was too theoretical and it had its limitations in solving contemporary problems. A more practical program was needed, and in the fall of 1969, William T. Tita and some of his colleagues arrived with some thoughts on how the Business School could harness its resources to meet the needs of minority businessmen. However, in its initial contacts with black businessmen, SCP soon became aware that many black entrepreneurs were not fully aware of the services that other organizations had available to them. Further inquiries suggested that many of the attempts to help made by other organizations had in some cases not been particularly successful--at least in the eyes of some clients. It was at this point that the founders felt that the resources of the Business School could be used most effectively by initiating a new effort. An entirely new and different organization was indicated. The organization should be oriented toward the need of the community.

As the consulting idea envolved, other ideas took shape. Clients should not be recruited; they should come to the organization by referral. Student consultants were determined, despite the lack of funds, to commence their activities.

The program began to move. Dr. H. Jerome Zoffer, the Dean of the Graduate School of Business, favored the proposal and soon made office space available to the new organization. Forty-three students signed up and thirty-two of them applied to be consultants. The number has steadily increased during the year, presently registering forty. This includes night students and several students from the Law school and the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs. We have also worked with students from Carnegie-Mellon University.

During the organization's first year and a quarter of activity, both the officers and the consultants worked without any financial remuneration nor reimbursement of transportation costs and out of pocket expenses incurred during their assignments. However, the Graduate School of Business provided the SCP with an office and a secretary.

In February, 1971, the SCP received two grants. The University-Urban Interface Program (UUIP) awarded the SCP a small portion of an Office of Education Grant. These funds will enable SCP to design a manual of operations for student consultants. A larger grant from Community Action Pittsburgh will make it possible for the SCP to pay its consultants and develop new programs and services for the minority business community. Although the organization's funding has just recently been settled, the student consultants, advisors and board members alike have continued to perform their functions with great enthusiasm.

At the present, a Board of Directors, consisting primarily of clients and university representatives provide the policy-guidance for the project. However, the organization is still primarily run by elected student officers.

IV. HOW IT OPERATES

Presently, the Student Consultant Project operates on three levels--the policy-making, the administrative, and the field level where consultants work with their clients.

A board with strong client representation assures responsiveness to the needs of the clients and generates further community support. All clients are eligible for election to the Board of Directors, which now consists of a minimum of thirteen members representing clients, the university student body, and outside members chosen for their interest in the project and their ability to offer meaningful advice. There is also an Executive Committee of the Board which frequently meets to review the progress of the organization and to consider

matters requiring policy decisions.

The day-to-day operations of the student consultant Project are run by the student officers. The responsibilities of the officers are as follows: The Chairman and Program Director of SCP oversee all activities of SCP; maintains contacts with all relevant organizations and individuals outside SCP, and reports to all SCP personnel on a regular basis concerning the overall program. The controller administers all financial matters connected with the SCP and prepares the annual budget. The central coordinator oversees the activities of team consultants, follows with client recruiters the progress of each client consultant relationship, evaluates the progress and effectiveness of each consultant team and collects all required reports from consultants. The Central-coordination Committee will be called upon to assist the Central Coordinator in various tasks. The Publicity Officer edits the SCP newsletter and handles inquiries concerning SCP. Client recruiters screen and select all SCP clients and follow the progress of each client-consultant relationship. The consultant provides quality business management advice to SCP clients, acts in accordance with the SCP goals and submits required reports to the Central Coordinator. (See Appendix B)

SCP and similar programs, even if successful, do not suddenly hope for a radical change for the better in the conduct of man. What they may do is to contribute toward the development of some of the poorer people in the society. Hopefully, some of the clients will develop skills and expertise that would take them into the societal and business mainstream. It is hoped that a shrewd black businessman who has done his homework and struggled for years against overwhelming odds might make it. Often, more than cash, this man needs knowledge and confidence. While rewarding, we have come to realize that working with minority persons attempting to establish viable businesses can be

frustrating and at times an anxious undertaking.

V. WHAT WE HAVE DISCOVERED

It would be nice if we could report that these efforts on the part of the student consultants have met with overwhelming success. The truth is, however, that student consulting is rife with problems -- some of them growing out of the nature of the clients and their communities, and some brought on by the consultants themselves. Additionally, there is the frequently difficult job of developing working rapport.

One of the greatest difficulties which any new student consultant faces is that of expecting the impossible. Fresh from the classroom laden with advanced academic theories and techniques, these students often believe that no matter how high the goals that they set for both their clients and themselves, they are sure to be reached. Thinking like this all too often leads to both disappointment and frustration, not only for the consultant, but for his client as well. In response to an evaluation made at the end of the year, most of our consultants indicated that their client did not have clear understanding of the types of assistance that they as members of SCP could properly offer. Often, the clients' expectations and the consultant's personal understanding of the service to be performed were in conflict.

Even if the student consultant himself is realistic about the potential of a given ghetto business, he may often find that the owner's enthusiasm is hard to control. Indeed, too much client enthusiasm can be liability rather than an asset, as some consultants have discovered.

For example, a well-known and successful businessman requested some consultants. In their initial visit with the client it became apparent that the client was intending to make them his employees. The consultants reluctantly explained their duty to him but indicated that they were prepared to do as

much as they could for him. In their next meeting they found out that the client had proceeded to dismiss his accountant who for many years had done nothing but constantly keep him in tax trouble and had planned to replace him (the accountant) with them. Again, they had to explain to the client their willingness to help the regular accountant or to search for a new one, but not assume the position themselves. When it became clear to the client that the consultants could not be used as employees, he adopted a policy of benign neglect. He would make an appointment and never show up or he would be sleeping when they called at 12:00. Eventually, the project was terminated. Fortunately, the business is well-established and managed to resolve its problems. Often an over-zealous attitude will keep both client and consultant from recognizing potential danger until it is too late.

Another obstacle that a student consultant has to face in developing a working relationship with his client is that of communication. Like so many other professionals today, the business student has a jargon all his own. Technical words from the classroom--words like "control," "bookkeeping system," and "feasibility study," -- have no meaning to the client. But the problem is much more than the adjustment needed on the part of the consultant. In many instances, the client will have only the vaguest notions about accounting, inventory management, financial planning and other essentials to successful entrepreneurship.

Indeed, studies indicate that the great majority of black small business failures result from lack of management know-how. At the same time, consultants are constantly reminded that many of their clients often are knowledgeable about business matters. Though they may lack a certain sophistication, clients are practicing businessmen who regularly deal with a full range of problems extending beyond his business to such societal problems as -- drug addiction, prosti-

tution, theft and other problems associated with the ghetto environment.

VI. OTHER THINGS WE DID

Most significantly, we have worked with and have come to understand better black businessmen and their special needs. Several of these businessmen have direction of the SCP.

On July 21, 1970, the SCP sponsored a Small Businessman's Night. Several aspects of this program are noteworthy, because they suggest roles that the SCP can perform and ways in which the organization can work with other groups and individuals in striving to achieve common ends.

This special event featured three short presentations, followed by five simultaneous discussion groups, and concluded with a general "rap" session. This entire program, from the conception of the idea through the detailed planning to its actual direction, was a cooperative effort of members of the black business community and the SCP. A group of businessmen and women participating in one of the earliest planning sessions recommended the topics around which the program was built. James Hunter, an outstanding entrepreneur, who has vision of a strong, viable black business community, in Pittsburgh was co-chairman of the evening. Mr. Hunter shared all major decision-making responsibility with Dave Freedman and Bill Tita, and he actively publicized the program among his friends and associates. Other businessmen and women contributed suggestions along the way or promoted the program with their communities.

This cooperative project extended to other sources of help as well. BJD was responsible for much of the attendance at the Small Businessman's Night as the result of a special letter of announcement. Forest Parr, President of BJD was among those who participated in the program, along with representatives of major banks, the SBA, the Allegheny Conference, the PCC, the Pittsburgh Police, and the University of Pittsburgh.

The discussion sessions were generally lively and often quite revealing. An atmosphere was created wherein persons with business on their mind could move from group to group, asking questions or speaking their piece. The participants listened, responded, and in several instances had their knuckles rapped. The program was meant to be informative. It was a success with information and opinion flowing both ways. A second annual night is planned.

Certainly persons who had a chance to talk with the Vice Chancellor and Assistant Vice Chancellor of Finance that evening came away with a new respect for the University's commitment to buy, wherever possible, from black businessmen. It was apparent that other offices and departments of the University, like the Graduate School of Business, had entered a new era of responsiveness to the needs of the minority business community. Since then, the University has awarded a contract to one of our clients and several others are being negotiated.

On several occasions, members of the project were asked by various community organizations to deliver lectures or work on specific problems confronting the organization. Some important invitations include the participation of SCP members in a twelve week management course offered to black businessmen by Business and Job Development Corporation, (BJD). The enthusiasm demonstrated by the students after the lectures have inspired BJD officials to consider SCP as an organization from which they can proudly ask for help. As a result, members of the SCP are lecturing almost half of the seminars scheduled for this year's class. We have also proposed and implemented a joint proposal to offer a course in Fundamental Bookkeeping to community people. Twenty-one businessmen and women have completed the first ten-week session. It has been considered a big success and a second session is due to start in another two weeks. The degree of cooperation that has evolved from this relationship and the process

by which it took place only point to the fact that the community is willing to work together with the university provided the experiment has payoffs to its citizens.

VII. LOOKING AHEAD

As we look at SCP - "One Year Later," we must look to the business community to truly gauge our worth. Over the year we have worked with black businessmen and improved our understanding of their needs. Several businessmen have become actively involved in supporting the SCP. We also recognize the impact this marriage between the University and small businessmen has had on some of us at the University. It has provided the chance for faculty and students to use their knowledge, understanding and skill to help our clients improve their operations. But, given the magnitude of the problem to which we are addressing ourselves, this is, at best, only a small contribution.

Far more needs to be done as we approach our second year. To make SCP a critically significant project in the Graduate School of Business, in the University, and in the community, we must reassert our position as a partner in community improvement. We must, by our actions, reject the notion of the University as an intellectual enclave above the problems of society. In addition, we would wish to see this year symbolized as one in which the Graduate School of Business came to fully utilize the promise of the SCP. Finally, we would like to see SCP expand its educational activities both within the University and the community.

The SCP has shown and continues to show that students are ready for this challenge. A meaningful period of University concern for the neighboring black community has begun.

VIII. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CONSTITUENTS, PROJECTS, AND RELATED AGENCIES

	1969-70	1970-71(4/71)
1. Consultants:		
Business Students	31	25
Law Students	0	5
Others	2	10
2. Faculty Adivsors	24	23
3. Business Consultants	8	13
4. Clients:		
Service Stations	1	2
Taverns	1	1
Hotels	1	2
Superettes	2	4
Manufacturing	2	2
Community Organizations	4	1
Others	11	18
Total	22	30

5. Projects:

1969-70	1970-71
1. Community Clothing Store Project- East Liberty Opportunity Center	1. Credit Union
2. Small Businessmen's Night	2. Bookkeeping Seminar
3. Participation Management course for Minority Entrepreneurs	3. University Purchases from Minority Businessmen
4. Fund Raising for Dwelling House Savings & Loan Assoc.	4. Small Businessmen's Night
5. Feasibility for Black Bank	5. National Conference for Student Consultants
6. Course on Ghetto Economics and its Development Assistance Needs	6. Series of courses on Ghetto Economics and its Development Assistance Needs
7. Community Action of Pittsburgh	7. Pilot Business in the Black community sponsored by SCP.

6. Contributing Organizations:

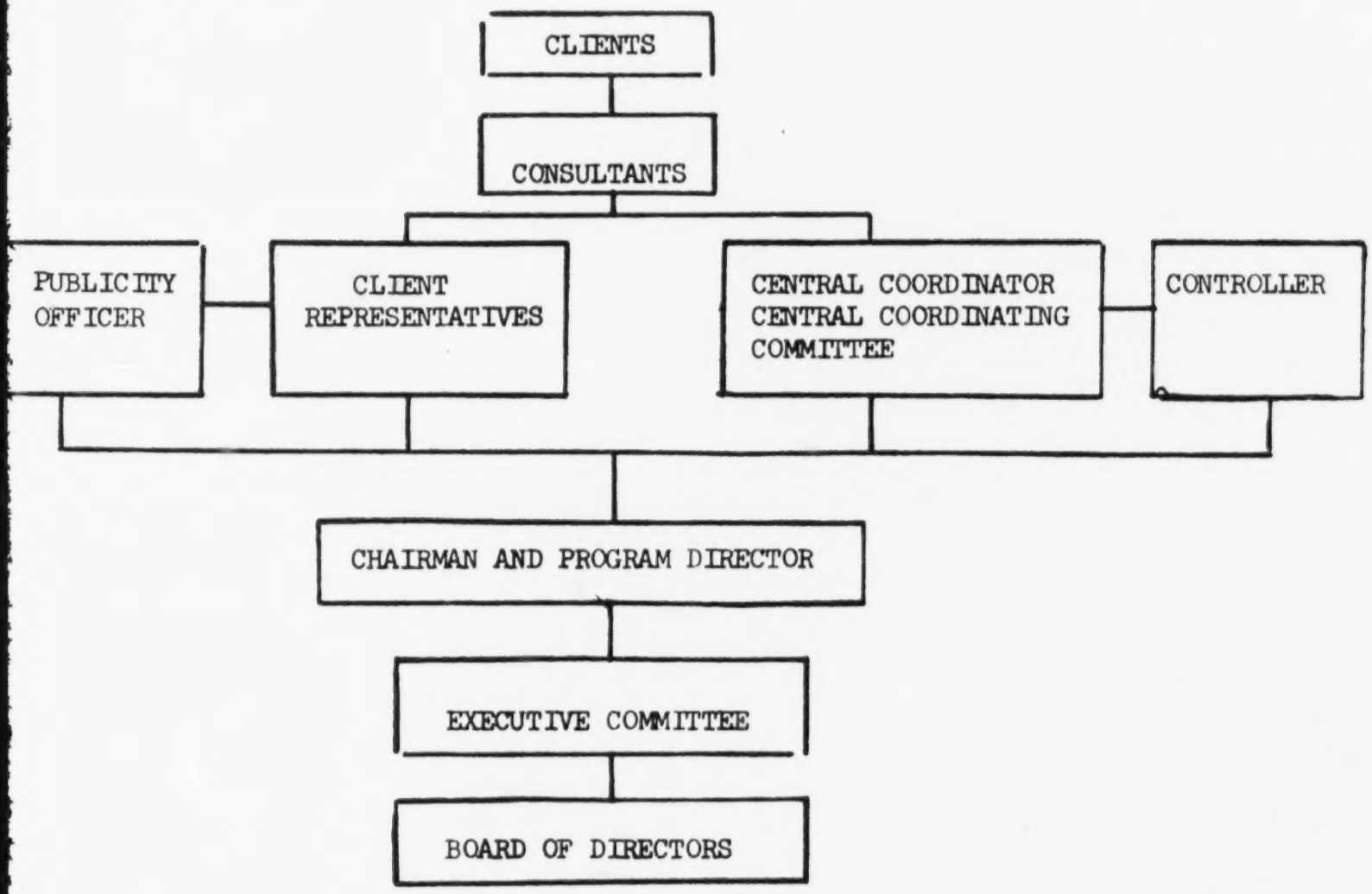
1. Graduate School of Business	1. Graduate School of Business

7. Funding Organizations:

1971-72	1972-73
1. Community Action Pittsburgh (CAP)	1. State monies through CAP.
2. University-Urban Interface Program	

APPENDIX B

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



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4. "The Business Student Consultant Project," Pitt Magazine, Vol. 26, No. 4, Winter, 1970, p. 11 (Report of the Chancellor).

Articles concerning projects at other Business Schools:

1. "How Students are Helping Ghetto Businessmen," Management Review, Vol. 58, No. 7, July, 1969, p. 60.

2. "Consulting in the Ghetto: A Case Study," The MBA, Vol. 2, No. 5, February, 1968, pp. 22-26.
(Business Assistance Program at Harvard)

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1. "Student Consultant -- Ghetto Client: A Developing Rapport," Joel Blasser, The MBA, Vol. 4, No. 1, October, 1969, pp. 30-32, 34.

*The above bibliography is suggested by David Freedman. For a more extensive bibliography, see Freedman's dissertation: An Analysis of Pittsburgh's Institutional Capability to Provide Effective Technical Assistance to Black Black Businessman (unpublished doctoral dissertation), Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh, August, 1971.

PROJECT REPORT

Contract No. OEG-2-9-480725-1027

Project No. 80725

Operation Outreach - Graduate School of Business

Student Consultant Project

Task II

A MANUAL OF PROCEDURES FOR THE CONSULTANT

THE STUDENT CONSULTANT PROJECT

TO: Dr. Robert C. Brictson
Director of Research Programs
University of Pittsburgh

FROM: Dr. Michael S. Koleda
Graduate School of Business
University of Pittsburgh

APRIL 1971

This manual is meant to serve as a reference guide for new consultants who upon joining the SCP seek information on the organization's background, structure, goals, activities, roles, relationships, and other facts which may influence the nature of their participation. The manual uses a question and answer format to provide the individual with information on those general and specific matters about which a prospective or recent member is most likely to inquire.

1. What is the Student Consultant Project?

The Student Consultant Project (SCP) is a non-profit student organization which provides management assistance, without charge, to small, primarily black, businessmen and to city and community organizations working toward economic and social improvements in poverty neighborhoods.

2. What are the goals of the SCP?

The goals of the organization range from the general -- opening an additional channel of communication and cooperation between blacks and whites, and between university and non-university persons -- to the specific -- development of a black economic base in Pittsburgh. The SCP has set forth four goals to guide its operations:

1. To help create black economic power in Pittsburgh: by strengthening client businesses or organizations, by creating additional jobs and by raising managerial skill levels and pride of our clients.
2. To focus attention of the Business School faculty upon pressing problems facing the Pittsburgh black business community. To date, twenty-five faculty and administrators have indicated their willingness to cooperate. Also, it is our hope in the future that faculty members will assign papers and research projects designed to explore alternative solutions to certain problems of these Pittsburgh businessmen. In addition, curriculum changes may also evolve. Courses might utilize student consulting assignments as their focal point. Seminars may be held to discuss the problems confronting ghetto business in particular.
3. To open a channel of communication between the business students (white and black) and black businessmen:
This may prove to be a major value of the project, as the predominantly white consultants and their black clients are thrown together often in confronting major problems. It is hoped that this process will help effect significant changes in both the

typical attitude of the Business School graduate and the black businessman.

4. To provide students with practical field experiences working with businesses during the school year.

3. How did the SCP get started?

The Student Consultant Project (SCP) was organized by William T. Tita and some of his MBA colleagues (1969-70) who believed that members of a great university must interact with their immediate environment for mutual understanding, cooperation, and tangible benefit. With this common understanding as a foundation, the small group set out to search for graduate students within the Pitt Business School who shared the belief that they could and should apply their skills to the needs of disadvantaged members of the Pittsburgh business community. Within a week after the notice was placed on the bulletin board forty-three students had been attracted, thirty-two of whom were to become active participants in the project.

That same week, in October 1969, interested students and faculty members from the Business School met to translate this new idea into an organizational structure capable of offering meaningful assistance. At this meeting and during successive sessions the project structure and the necessary operational requirements were defined as stated in the charter of the Project.

4. What is the financial structure of the SCP?

The SCP is a non-profit, student-operated service organization whose fiscal agent is the Graduate School of Business of the University of Pittsburgh. Fees generally are not charged for services to individual clients. The organization seeks to maintain itself through grants and donations from government agencies, foundations, corporations, individuals, and other private sources in accordance with University regulations governing such funds. The Graduate Business School receives and administers all funds for the SCP.

5. What are the elective student offices of the SCP?

The student membership of the SCP holds an annual election for the purpose of filling the positions of chairman and controller.

6. What are the non-elective student positions in the SCP?

The Executive Committee in consultation with the chairman, the controller and the general membership appoints a central coordinator, client representatives and publicity officers. The central coordinator selects the members of the central coordinating committee.

All graduate level students at the University of Pittsburgh and other local institutions of higher learning are eligible to serve in the position of student consultant.

7. What are the responsibilities of the chairman?

The chairman oversees and coordinates all activities of the SCP. He conducts SCP general membership meetings and presides over many special purpose meetings. He reports regularly to all SCP personnel on program-related matters. He represents the SCP at meetings, functions, negotiations, and contracts with other organizations. He maintains contact with organizations and individuals providing related forms of assistance to the same client community. He serves on the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

8. What are the responsibilities of the controller?

The controller is responsible for the day-to-day administration of all SCP-related financial matters. Specifically, he prepares SCP's annual budget and administers the payroll. Additionally, he is available to assist the chairman with other administrative tasks, and he serves on the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee. The controller reports directly to the chairman and assumes responsibility for his duties in the chairman's absence. Provision has been made for the election of an assistant controller in future years.

9. What are the responsibilities of the central coordinator?

The central coordinator maintains necessary background information on consultants, recommends consultants for particular assignments, coordinates the collection, processing, and aggregation of data from the field, evaluates each project in terms of consultant performance and client progress through field reports and other relevant sources of information, and supervises the members of the central coordinating committee. He may additionally become involved with consultant recruiting, and interpretation of aggregated data, the latter for the purposes of program measurement, project adjustments, and operational planning. The central coordinator reports directly to the chairman.

10. What are the responsibilities of the central coordinating committee?

Members of the central coordinating committee assist the central coordinator with his given responsibilities. They may be assigned to specific task areas. It is envisioned that as the SCP grows, and with it the responsibility of the central coordinating committee, each committee member will head a section comprising all activities in a particular area. Such major areas of responsibility might include general client services, client accounting and bookkeeping problems, special SCP projects, and the like.

11. What are the responsibilities of the client representatives?

Client representatives (originally called client recruiters) screen and assess the needs of all prospective SCP clients through visits to their offices or places of business. During the initial visit a client representative obtains the signature of the prospective client on a "Client Agreement Form," and requests information necessary for completing an SCP "Application Form." After this session the client representative recommends acceptance or non-acceptance of the case, a decision generally based on whether the SCP is institutionally equipped to help the prospective client with his problems. Where appropriate, an individual will be redirected to organizations providing the needed or requested form(s) of aid.

Upon accepting a case, a client representative recommends to the central coordinator the types of assistance or form of consultant skills which need to be applied to particular client problems. Ideally, once a consultant or consulting team has been assigned, the client representative follows the consultant-client working relationship by maintaining contact with the respective parties.

12. How many students are appointed to the position of client representative?

There is not a specified number of client representatives. The exact number of students serving in this capacity at any one time is subject to the following influences: the demand for SCP services by the client community as related to the number of available student consultants, and the presence within the organization of students qualified to fill this position.

13. What qualities should a client representative possess?

A client representative should possess diagnostic skills, awareness of and sensitivity to black conditions and the ability to establish rapport with students and businessmen alike. While client representatives are most often black for cultural reasons, there is nothing to preclude white students with especially appropriate skills and adequate understanding from serving in this position.

14. What are the responsibilities of the publicity officers?

The publicity officers assign articles to be written for the SCP Newsletter and edit written materials submitted to the paper. Additionally, they provide information to outside persons and organizations inquiring about or requiring specific facts on the SCP; they also assume responsibility, shared with other officers, for public relations.

15. What are the responsibilities of a student consultant?

A student consultant is asked to provide quality management assistance to his assigned client. He should strive to establish a firm working relationship from which he can bring to bear on the client's problems the knowledge and skills he possesses and any needed information to which he has access. The consultant

is responsible for submitting to the central coordinator a bi-monthly or monthly report on consulting activities with respect to his client.

16. What predominantly non-student bodies are part of the SCP organizational structure?

The SCP has a Board of Directors, a Board of Directors' Executive Committee, and an Advisory Group.

17. What is the composition of the Board of Directors?

The Board of Directors consists of a minimum of eleven members and a maximum of eighteen. A maximum of five members are to represent the client community; a maximum of four members are to be from the faculties or administrative staffs of participating academic organizations; a maximum of four members are to represent community organizations providing funds or services to the client community, and/or to the SCP; the SCP chairman and controller and a maximum of two additional members are to represent active student participants in the SCP.

18. How are the members of the Board of Directors selected?

The Dean of the Graduate School of Business and the chairman and controller of the SCP serve on the Board ex officio for the term during which they are in office. The remaining members of the Board are elected by the total student and non-student membership of the SCP.

19. What are the responsibilities of the Board of Directors?

The Board of Directors provides leadership for the development of SCP philosophy and goals, oversees SCP activity -- particularly the actions of officers -- to ensure fulfillment of organizational goals, provides continuity, strengthens communications between the SCP and the city's overall business community, and approves SCP budgets, supervises financial affairs and conducts periodic audits as necessary.

20. What is the composition of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors?

The Executive Committee comprises the Chairman of the Board, the Chairman of the SCP, a Board member from the client community, a student representative on the Board, and one additional Board member, all elected by majority vote of the Board.

21. What are the responsibilities of the Executive Committee?

The Executive Committee works with student officers of the SCP to establish policy to guide the SCP in its operations, with particular emphasis on the areas of community relations, financial support and budgetary decision-making, and

organizational continuity. In addition, the Executive Committee seeks nominations for membership on the Board of Directors, approves non-budgeted expenditures up to $100, and calls meetings of the student membership of the SCP, when deemed necessary.

22. What is the SCP Advisory Group?

The SCP Advisory Group is a unstructured body comprising faculty, professionals and businessmen who have indicated a willingness to advise student consultants on particular consulting problems or tasks and to provide direct services to clients when necessary.

23. Why should I as a student join the SCP?

Benefits to the student include first-hand knowledge of the forces at work within his inner-city environment, contact with people who reside within ghetto areas, and an introduction to or heightened awareness of their problems, attitudes, ideas, and personalities, and an opportunity to use his newly-acquired knowledge to improve the economic and social conditions of the minority community. In return, the community and some of its members receive whatever assistance that the students can provide. It is less apt then to regard the university as an institution unconcerned and uncommitted to its larger environment.

Most importantly, students who are future professionals will have been exposed to the real conditions and needs of black businessmen, and, as a result, will be better prepared to develop new and appropriate solutions to their problems.

24. Is enrollment in the Graduate School of Business a prerequisite for student involvement in the SCP?

While the large majority of student consultants have been enrolled in the Business School's MBA or doctoral programs, the organization welcomes the participation of students from other Pitt graduate schools as well as other local universities. In the past the SCP has attracted student consultants from Pitt's Law School, and Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, and from Carnegie-Mellon University's Graduate School of Industrial Administration.

25. Does the Graduate School of Business provide course credit to students for their participation in the SCP?

The Graduate Business School does not provide course credit for SCP participation. If the Business School should decide to move in that direction in the future it could follow only after the development of a well-defined set of criteria to assure a high level of graduate work with no sacrifice in consultant service to clients.

26. Can a student relate his activity in the SCP to work in other courses?

The SCP provides the student with a unique type of laboratory in which to test theories and principles and utilize and adapt tools and techniques acquired in the classroom. At the same time, field operations, particularly those which are client-related, provide insights into technical and human conditions and relationships, along with practical experiences which can be carried back into the classroom. It remains for each student to inquire of his individual professors how he may apply his SCP-acquired knowledge to their courses. In the past SCP experiences have served as the basis for many worthwhile term papers.

27. Has SCP activity influenced course development?

The emergence of the SCP concommitant with the increased enrollment of black MBA students called attention to areas of academic inquiry and problem-solving relevant to the professional interests of many black and a few white MBA candidates, that were not part of the existing curriculum. Two students proposed, and with faculty support offered an experimental and developmental course oriented toward problems, concepts, relationships, and programs with respect to "The Ghetto Economy and Its Development Assistance Needs." The insights provided by the educational experience served as the basis for the development and acceptance into the Graduate School of Business curriculum of a course titled "Theory and Process of Black Business Development." This course is viewed as the first in a series of course developments and curricular options enabling the Graduate School of Business to more adequately meet the professional needs and aspirations of its black students, the development needs of the black community, and the needs of the corporate sector with respect to its role in black economic development.

28. Are there any special relationships between the SCP and the larger university with which it is associated?

Today's large inner city university must become increasingly sensitive to the needs of hitherto neglected segments of the larger community of which it is a part. The University of Pittsburgh views the SCP as one of the projects through which it is forging a new community service role. In return, the SCP as a community services organization sees as one of its roles influencing University policy with respect to the minority community. The SCP has encouraged and assisted the University in adaptation of purchasing policies to enable local black businesses to receive proper consideration when the University accepts bids and awards contracts for goods and services. SCP involvement influenced the awarding of a contract to one of the group's clients.

29. What are some of the other special projects which the SCP has planned and implemented?

The SCP planned and conducted in cooperation with members of the black business community a Small Business Night arranged to provide information on sources and procedures for obtaining capital and management assistance, uni-

versity contracts and increased security, as well as a setting for businessmen and women to talk openly to the representatives of all the major institutions participating in Pittsburgh's Minority Enterprise Assistance Program. Moreover, the SCP has developed and provided instructors for a ten-week bookkeeping course and is actively working with the black community to create a credit union.

30. What is the effect of outside funding on SCP operations?

SCP is a voluntary organization to the extent that students who decide to participate do so willingly without promise of any benefits outside of the satisfaction and learning that comes from doing something about contemporary problems. The student's time, however, is limited by other responsibilities and school work and activities that compete for his attention. To ensure that a student's obligations are met and his interest maintained, financial remuneration has been found to provide an added inducement. Leon Sullivan's remark that "the best volunteer is a paid volunteer" is applicable here!

Since we are just beginning to develop courses which furnish the student with knowledge and understanding of the ghetto economy, and at the same time better prepare him to provide technical assistance to minority businessmen, there is a need to maintain a high level of participation while providing adequate controls on performance. Financial compensation helps to guarantee a satisfactory level of participation while providing the administration with a tool for monitoring SCP operations. At the same time outside funding enables the organization to develop new programs and tools for better serving the needs of its client community.

31. Does the SCP conduct an orientation and training program for incoming student consultants?

The SCP has not had in the past a structured, comprehensive training and orientation program. However, black educators, businessmen and professionals have been invited to SCP meetings to discuss their experiences and perceptions related to the black business community, with particular emphasis on introducing white students to situations and conditions that will require adjustments in their thinking and behavior. Lists of readings on black-related subjects have been made available to all students.

Over time, the SCP may wish to institute workshops, seminars, or courses for orientation and training purposes. Preparation might impart or improve interviewing, diagnostic, planning, implementation, human relations, and reporting skills, as well as heightened awareness and sensitivity to special circumstances.

32. What is the ultimate objective of a consultant in working with a client?

The ultimate objective is to develop in the client the capability and skills to identify, confront, and solve problems with only limited outside help.

33. How does a consultant work towards reaching this objective?

The consultant must strive to develop a collaborative relationship in which there is mutual determination of goals, a sharing of data and ideas for the purpose of decision-making, and a power distribution in which the consultant and client have almost equal opportunities to influence one another. Such a working relationship can only develop where the consultant is able to accept that which is strange or different from his own ways and identify with or project himself into the client's position.

34. Are SCP clients considered to be members of the organization?

It is not intended that SCP clients become actively involved in the daily operations of the organization, but several businessmen have been more than clients; they have been partners in shaping the form and direction of the SCP's assistance activities.

A Board with strong client representation assures responsiveness to the needs of the clients and generates further community support. All clients are eligible for election to the Board of Directors.

At times, some clients have collaborated with the SCP in planning and implementing special projects, an indispensable form of support and cooperation.

35. Why does the SCP require a client to sign a "Client Agreement Form"?

The client who asks to be provided with management assistance from the SCP becomes a partner in a cooperative and voluntary association. The "Client Agreement Form" states in writing that information given by the client is treated in confidence by the organization and that the client has the right to terminate SCP services at any time. The SCP only asks that the client agree to cooperate to the fullest extent possible with the consultants assigned to work with him.

36. How is the SCP community informed of organizational activities?

The principal informational vehicle of the SCP is the SCP Newsletter. Students, faculty and administrators contribute an assortment of reports on programs and activities, theoretical and analytical pieces, case studies, book reviews, and operational hints for consultants and businessmen. The Newsletter generally is published at four to eight-week intervals and distributed to student consultants, SCP clients, Business School faculty, and others in the University and larger Pittsburgh Community with interest in SCP activities.

Other avenues of communication among SCP student members include general membership meetings, special purpose meetings, intra-organizational memoranda, reports to the membership by the chairman, and informal rap sessions held in the SCP office.

37. What are the organizations involved in black business and economic development or minority affairs with which the SCP has a working association?

A. Minority Business and Professional Organizations

1. Business and Professional Association (BPA)
2. Business and Professional Women's Association
3. Hill District Board of Trade
4. Homewood Board of Trade
5. Homewood Chamber of Commerce

B. Funding Sources

1. Pittsburgh National Bank
2. Mellon National Bank
3. Western Pennsylvania National Bank
4. Union National Bank
5. Small Business Administration (SBA)
6. Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD)

C. Community Organizations

1. Business and Job Development Corp. (BJD)
2. Urban League
3. NAACP
4. United Black Protest Committee
5. Direct Action Coalition
6. Forever Action Together (FAT)
7. United Black Front
8. Together, Inc.

D. Training Programs

1. Bidwell Cultural and Training Center
2. Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC)
3. Operation Dig

E. Federal Programs

1. Community Action Pittsburgh (CAP) - Office of Economic Opportunity
2. Pittsburgh Model Cities
3. Turtle Creek Valley Model Cities
4. Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) - Dept. of Commerce
5. Small Business Administration

F. Other

1. Pittsburgh Coordinating Council (PCC)
2. Misters, Inc.
3. Pittsburgh Afro American Investment and Development
4. AUTGCH
5. Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants
6. Pittsburgh Jaycees
7. Pittsburgh Advertising Club
8. East End Churches Legal Service Society
9. National Association of Accountants

PROJECT REPORT

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Operation Outreach - Graduate School of Business

Student Consultant Project

Task III

COMMUNICATION, CONTROL, INFORMATION FLOW AND ANALYSIS: A REPORT ON PROBLEM AREAS IN THE STUDENT CONSULTANT PROJECT

TO: Dr. Robert C. Brictson
Director of Research Programs
University of Pittsburgh

FROM: Dr. Michael S. Koleda
Graduate School of Business
University of Pittsburgh

APRIL 1971

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I INTRODUCTION

Now in its eighteenth month of operation, the Student Consultant project faces some hard questions. No longer an embryonic organization for which "anything goes", the SCP must come to grips with some serious difficulties that exist in the areas of communication, control, and information flow.

Basically a technical assistance undertaking comprised of student volunteers highly motivated to use their training for social goals, the mission of the organization is threatened by an apparent lack of a solid internal structure of communication and control, and is in real need of hard feedback data on its effectiveness.

In part, the existence of problems of this sort in SCP is not surprising when it is recognized that the Student Consultant Project has combined an innovative model of technical assistance with largely inexperienced personnel and little substantive support. But if the Project is to be more than a "harmless" opportunity for well-meaning students to feel a sense of social committment backed up with action, it is imperative that resources be diverted from "line" duties (consulting and recruiting of clients) to such staff functions as tightening the internal organization and straightening out the information flows so desperately needed. All this will serve to improve the efficiency of the organization as it is now structured.

But, there is yet another task that confronts the Student Consultant Project volunteers. A noble endeavor,such as the SCP is, must anticipate and inevitably face the difficult question of its own effectiveness. If the question is easily asked, it is not so easily answered.

Socially oriented undertakings are generally devoid of any measurable surrogates for output, and goals are frequently unclear, generally stated, or merely implicit, all of which tends to frustrate attempts at evaluation.

While it is recognized that in the early stages of an organization such as the SCP there needs to be a certain period of groping, growing, and taking root lest well-intentioned but probing analysis and evaluation kill early naivete at the expense of later effectiveness. That early stage seems now past for the Student Consultant Project.

In Part II of this report an analysis is presented of communication and control problems in an organization built on the SCP model. The presentation is developed generally enough to serve as a useful aid in the evolution of similar undertakings at other institutions and settings.

In Part III a closer look is taken at problems of communication and control as currently experienced by the SCP.

Part IV is devoted to information collection and analysis, currently one of the least developed and potentially more important activities at the SCP.

Part V contains a look at areas for continued research and study that appear to have potential indeveloping a better understanding of the promise that the SCP holds as a model for channeling assistance to aid minority groups in attaining upward social and economic mobility.

Part VI is an exhibits section.

II COMMUNICATION AND CONTROL IN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Strong, dynamic leadership may be a motivating, driving force in a technical assistance organization, but it is the administrative functions of communication and control that provide cohesion and stability, permitting a group to operate with a minimum of inefficiency and delays. Communication and control: for the consultant they can mean proper instructions, and supporting services where necessary; for the client they can mean ongoing assistance adjusted to his special needs, and follow-up attention when required; and for the organization they can mean continuity of action and the capacity to measure individual and organizational performance.

Communication assumes special importance in technical assistance operations, because in most instances the central office and the locations of the interaction with clients are physically separated. This provides more opportunities for information to be lost, distorted or simply not transmitted. For illustrative purposes, one can assume that a person in need of certain assistance contacts or has another party contact for him the central office of a recommended technical assistance group. If initial communication is over the phone, someone has to request and take note of whatever basic information is required to identify the prospective client and the nature of his request for assistance. Unless the problem is seemingly simple, an individual, presumably a generalist, will have to be dispatched to the client's place of operation to gather greater detail on the needs of the client. This consultant may be assigned to work with the client, or his responsibility may go no further than establishing contact and making the initial assessment. In this latter instance, he will have to report

his findings to his office. The client then will await the assignment of a consultant or a team of consultants to work with him on an on-going basis. Let us say that a consultant begins to work with a client, but after three visits he suddenly decides to terminate the working relationship. He may have determined that the problem is more complex than initially judged, calling for special skills which he does not possess;or possibly he has not been able to related well with the client. In any case, the existing situation requires the assignment of a new consultant. The group providing assistance may find a new consultant within its own group, or it may have to turn to an outside agency if the client needs special expertise which the group does not possess. In either situation, a specialist eventually is assigned to the client, and in a reasonable period of time a problem is solved, and results become apparent. The consultant leaves the client with the understanding that the client is to contact the central office as soon as a further need for assistance develops.

This illustration has been designed to focus attention on the importance of a steady flow of information for the efficient handling of each case. In the absence of direct communication between consultants (which is not always possible or feasible), in the case cited there are, at a minimum, seven instances in which information has to be received or transmitted by a central source. In the absence of a smooth and accurate flow of information, there is a potential danger that the assistance provided to the client will be inappropriate for his problem, or unnecessarily interrupted or cut off. The foregoing suggests the need for a reporting system and staff procedures suitable for maintaining

ongoing assistance efforts.

Reporting - A technical assistance group, like any organization, is dependent upon records and reports to document its past, to assist in the direction of its present, and to plan its future. Reports are especially important for groups providing an outside clientele with a service that cannot be readily measured through usual standards of productivity or work efficiency. Reporting may serve as a vehicle for directing, maintaining, and measuring and controlling field performance.

Accurate information about a client increases the likelihood of matching a consultant or consulting team to the needs of the client. At the same time, it allows for special preparation and guidance for cases that appear to differ considerably from the norm.

Along with providing valuable inputs that serve preliminary direction, reporting furnishes information that is useful in maintaining continuous service to a client. First, reports can be used to suggest the need for additional resources and supporting services required by the consultant on his assignment. Secondly, when a consultant leaves a client, a series of well prepared reports can indicate to his replacement a diagnosis of problems and the necessary steps to bring about improvements. Here a final report is extermely useful in reducing the time lost due to a personnel change, to what is necessary to reestablish a sound working relationship between a consultant and the client. Continuity is important in consultant-client relationships. An up-to-date file on a client should help a new consultant to attenuate the impact of an abrupt personnel change. In addition, follow-up assistance at a later date is facilitated by a complete set of records.

Reports also may serve as an indicator of the quality of as-

sistance being provided by the consultant. Information on the extent to which a client is actually being helped and on the consultant's ability to relate to and apply his expertise to particular sets of conditions is a tremendous aid in making operational decisions. In a related sense, a flow of fairly accurate information serves as a feedback mechanism. If the consultant's performance is being measured according to certain standards, feedback on the field experience may provide insights on recommendable adjustments in consultant behavior, or it may suggest a need to reformulate the original standards. In either case, reporting can serve as a control on much of the behavior of the organization and its membership.

On the basis of a continuing flow of information, it is possible to make certain immediate corrections in performance. Over the long run, data and increased knowledge can govern the planning of new activities and the reshaping of existing programs and operations.[1]

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[1] While demonstrating the functions that can be abetted by reports and records, it is necessary to point out the limitations and potential risk associated with reporting, particularly where its operational details are poorly conceived, or it is treated as a pro forma chore.

Consultants may choose not to comply with reporting guidelines. It is difficult to measure performance by using reports that provide sketchy and incomplete data. Yet the provision of insufficient information, or even total noncompliance, does not necessarily signify that the consultant is not providing proper assistance. Some persons disdain a detailed procedure which they feel interferes with their primary responsibility of helping the client. Others are merely forgetful or prefer to put off to tomorrow what appears as a bother for today.

There is no question that cumbersome reporting requirements can be a drain on vital manhours and that the necessity to provide detailed accounts of all operations may stifle individual initiative and blunt personal commitment. At that point the organization is facing the risk that a process, an institutional means,is becoming a distinct end in itself. Adherence to sets of rigid requirements, reporting or otherwise, cannot be allowed to take precedence over, or interfere with, goal achievement and operating efficiency. Clearly, reporting requirements must be rational and concise if they are to serve desired ends. At the same time, they should be complemented by othere suitable procedures, in the pursuit of high levels of performance.

Staff procedures - This paper has discussed the qualities of leadership and those of consultants and suggested that a leader can infuse the organization with purpose and motivate its members to work to accomplish the intermediate objectives that move an organization closer to its long range stated goals. Also it has been demonstrated that the total technical assistance process encompasses a range of activities beginning with goal definition and including consultant recruitment, preparation, placement and evaluation, project maintenance and appraisal, and program planning and publicity. As the leader is not capable of performing all of these functions personally, there are a number of roles to be occupied by other competent personnel. The larger the organization, the more of these positions that can be expected to be filled by specialists. Yet in all technical assistance organizations, down to almost the smallest in size, staffing and the delegation of special authority are exceedingly important in matters of communication and control.

This paper already has set forth its case for a steady flow of essential information, illustrating a series of strategic points at which messages have to be transmitted and received, if efficiency and continuity are to be maintained. To keep information loss to a minimum, it would appear feasible to establish a specially staffed information exchange networks. Requests for needed information could go out from this information center, and reports and other relevant informational inputs could be channeled through it from the field. Incoming communications would be processed and either responded to by the receiver or passed on to the appropriate person for further attention. An information exchange network is recommended to minimize omission and inaccurate information flow. Clearly, diminishing returns will set in at that point in a growing organization where the information exchange

system becomes overloaded; decentralized units then need to be introduced. The processes of sending, receiving, coding, decoding and filtering information require the efforts of highly dedicated, methodical individuals who recognize the importance of their functions, while appreciating that basically they are merely supportive of a larger purpose.

Another special staff function that is likely to improve operating efficiency, while allowing for greater control, especially where reporting is not quite adequate, relates back to the procedure of establishing initial personal contact with the client. During the first communication over the phone or through a letter, a client may request specialized assistance for a quite specific problem. Yet in most instances, contact at a distance will not adequately establish the client's need. A technical assistance organization then should consider sending an individual or a team into the field to make a more thorough determination of the client's real or most critical needs. Persons should be selected for such arrangements who have proven diagnostic ability, cultural awareness and a personality which lends itself to establishing quick rapport. Such individuals will be referred to here as project officers. While it may be regarded as desirable to allow project officers to work with select clients until project completion, their special skills and attributes lend themselves to this recommended responsibility and several very important supporting activities.

After assessing the client and his situation, a project officer can report through the information exchange system the type of consultant or the set of skills that should be matched with the needs of the client. This information can be communicated to the project leader or, in a larger organization, to the placement officer, who would be responsible for knowing the background, skills and availability of all

consultants. After a consultant has been selected, the project officer should brief him on his assignment, and whereever possible, arrange and accompany him to his meeting with the client.

Having performed these duties, the project officer is in an ideal position to maintain contact with both the consultant and the client throughout the duration of the project. He can encourage the consultant to share project related problems with him. He can follow the consultant's reports for indications of achievement or for signs of technical and interpersonal difficulties. He can, at his discretion, visit the client in the field to observe if improvements are occuring and to learn how the client regards his working relationship with the consultant. Finally, where justifiable, the project officer may recommend the replacement of the consultant or the termination of the project. Thus, through a range of related activities, the project officer can significantly contribute to the efficiency and control of field operations.

III COMMUNICATION AND CONTROL: THE STUDENT CONSULTANT PROJECT EXPERIENCE

The SCP has experienced intra-organizational communication difficulties in spite of an elaborate reporting system that was introduced into the organization from day one of its operations. A two page detailed applcation form was provided for the use of the client representative or student officer who first evaluated a client's business (Exhibit A). Two page confidential report forms were made available to consultants for the purpose of bi-weekly progress reports on their clients (Exhibit B). Interested students were asked to fill out a one page application form, noting among other things their education, work experience, and consulting interest or expertise (Exhibit C). It was envisioned that a Central Coordinating Committee would use the information supplied on client and consultant application forms to more efficiently match consultants and clients. The consultant confidential report forms would allow the Central Coordinating Committee and the client representatives to follow the progress of each client-consultant relationship and evaluate how efficiently each client was being served. A file was prepared on each client with the intention that it would be kept current until the case had been closed. A part-time secretary maintained these files, referred calls for assistance to a client respresentative, and after his visit notified the consultants who had been assigned to the case.

From an operational standpoint, the reporting system did not function as intended. In certain cases where the client representatives did not prepare evaluation forms after their visits, days or weeks

passed before consultants were assigned to clients awaiting assistance.[2] Still the major problem was not that the students were not utilizing the client application form and the consultant confidential report form. One or both forms could be found in the files of most clients who had received at least one visit, although only one client's file contained more than two bi-weekly consultant reports. The more serious problems were the uneven quality of the reports themselves, and the infrequent referral to materials in clients' files by consultants and SCP officers. In most cases the reports themselves did not permit an in depth understanding of a client's problems, service performed and improvements made, and conditions requiring future attention.[3] The average file did not contain a sufficient amount of the type of information needed to acquaint a new consultant or an officer with the background and current status of the case.[4]

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[2] In those cases where a client representative visited a client to evaluate his business situation and did not report his findings in writing, there was no information to pass on to the consultants eventually assigned to the case. They, in turn, on their first visit might conduct a survey similar to that performed by the client representative. Such duplication of effort could give the client the impression that he was being researched and inhibit the development of necessary confidence.

[3] This should not take anything away from the approximately half-dozen reports which were highly professional in form and content, or the files which included copies of studies or systems developed for clients.

[4] The recording of this information is essential in an organization which at times requests additional assistance from cooperating organizations and which has to assign new consultants to almost all continuing clients at the end of the academic year. After the August graduation of the first year's consultants, each client's file was examined to determine the case's stage of completion. More than half of the first year cases had been completed or terminated for various reasons. Around 20% clearly

It was believed by some persons connected with the organization that the forms being used were too long and cumbersome. In an attempt to provide consultants with a report form that was not unwieldy, yet functionally suited to eliciting needed information, at the beginning of the second year, the old form first was modified; then it was replaced by an easily administered checklist modeled after a form used by a management consulting firm (Exhibit D). Changes will be made if it is believed that they will allowconsultants to obtain and record essential information.

However, even the most manageable form will not be used properly by consultants who regard report writing as an unimportant or unpleasant task to be put off or carried out hastily. While volunteer consultants can be impressed with the importance of regularly providing lucid reports this cannot be achieved by mandate or through coercion.[5]

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continued by incoming student consultants. With respect to the remaining 20-25% of the cases, there was not written indication of at what stage the case had been left. Nor was the small staff that remained to provide assistance during the month of August able to find in the files of two clients certain specific information which would avoid possible duplication of effort in one instance requiring immediate attention, and incorrect respose to another institution's inquiry in the other.

5 During the second year, finding that delinquent client reports remained a problem, a member of the Central Coordinating Committee drafted a memorandum to be sent to consultants whose client's files were imcomplete. A member of the Committee checks off on the memo the form(s) which are missing or imcomplete. The memo is expected to serve as reminder of the necessity to maintain a complete file.

For some students the problem may not be one of lack of discipline, rather one of lack of know-how. A talent for report writing, like the business knowledge and skills that the consultant themselves are asked to transfer, is not inherent in a person. It too must be acquired. This suggests that knowledgeable faculty or students should be asked at the start of the academic year to conduct for student consultants one or more classes on the basic elements of substantive report writing. This may have a surprising effect on the quality of future reporting.

Nevertheless, the SCP experience illustrates that the mere availability of report forms, and the creation of positions with responsibility for obtaining or processing information are not sufficient to maintain a stream of information that might facilitate the provision of adequate assistance to every client. The SCP needs at least one paid employee with responsibility for being aware of the forms of assistance required, work being performed, the progress being made, the stage of completion, and the need for follow-up on all active cases. Such knowledge is a precondition for the efficient administration of each case. Moreover, by almost eliminating all inadvertent instances of client neglect or discontinuity of action, it may serve to avoid cases where clients lose confidence in the organization. A sound reporting system with adequate staff provisions must be assigned a very high priority in any technical assistance organization that is serious about its work.

IV DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

There is no question that one of the most glaring weaknesses of the Student Consultant Project centers around data collection and analysis. It is imperative that up-to-date and complete information be available regarding every client, and at this time such basic information is simply not being effectively collected. Without a clear picture of the progress or lack thereof in a consultant-client relationship one can only conclude that a contact between the two has been initiated. It is not possible to judge whether the result of the contact was beneficial either to the client or the consultant. There needs to be increasing attention paid to problems of keeping accurate, informative and current records for every consulting relationship.

The importance of all this becomes apparent when it is realized that the present extent of data gathering does not give a feel for the degree to which the SCP model is effective in meeting even its own goals. There are not measures of success that would indicate that a particular client-consultant involvement has been worthwhile--one only knows from the present state of data gathering that a contact has been initiated. There has never been a meeting of the SCP at which a formal evaluation and review of operations to date has been undertaken.

Clearly, this cannot continue without exposing the SCP to the criticism that it is not measurably effective as a technical assistance vehicle. Somehow knowing and feeling that the SCP

model is meeting its stated goals is no substitute for documentation of effectiveness.

Were the SCP a profit oriented organization its continued existence would testify to its apparent value to clients. Without such a market test, other surrogates must be developed. Identification and maintenance of such measures of effectiveness must become a primary responsibility of the SCP. If the SCP is to gain credibility as a model of technical assistance questions such as as these must be addressed forthrightly--not in the abstract, at a hypothetical level--against the backdrop of measurable surrogates of effectiveness.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Student Consultant Project at the Graduate School of Business is one model of student involvement with social action. The question arises as to whether the model should be further developed here and its duplication encouraged elsewhere.

While there are some internal organizational difficulties, particularly with communication and control as noted above, these are recognized and there appears to be a strong commitment to improve in these areas. The single most important concern is measurement of the effectiveness of the Student Consultant Project model. Report writing, case documentation, and follow-up studies are either not being done, or being done so inconsistently and incompletely as to be essentially useless for purposes of evaluation.

While a general feeling of effectiveness pervades the organization (students continue to be enthused with the Project and clients are always in greater supply than consultants) it must be remembered that the organization provides its services at zero cost to the client and does not face, therefore, the market test for survival.

We suspect that the Student Consultant Project model has been and continues to be an effective model for channeling expertise found in University settings to social problem solving in the area of minority business development. However, the case must be made explicit both as a necessary justification for further development of the model at the Graduate School of Business and in support of the adoption of the model in other institutional settings. The following

recommendations are toward this end:

Recommendations - Short Run

1. An individual be designated to take responsibility for insuring that consultants report regularly and fully on their progress with clients.
2. Case histories be developed on each client which would include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the consultant input, and a set of suggestions for alternative approaches that might be fruitful could the case be duplicated.
3. Follow-up studies be undertaken on all clients at regular intervals.
4. Classes be conducted on the basic elements of substantive report writing for new consultants.
5. Consultants be instructed in the need for regular weekly summaries, and monthly reports.
6. Communication between SCP officers and consultants be encouraged and facilitated through regularly scheduled meetings marked by two-way communication on questions and problems.
7. Consultants be formally acquainted with sources of needed information and expertise.

Recommendations - Longer Run

It is recommended that a proposal be developed and outside funding sought for a tight effort at evaluation of the Student Consultant Project model as one way of a) involving students with the facts of minority business development, b) offering an opportunity to students to become

involved with social problems in their profession, and c) of providing technical assistance to minority businessmen. One approach would be to select randomly three groups of clients, aiding one on the SCP model, another on the basis of group classes directed to problems of general concern to minority businessmen, and giving the third group no help. While it would be naive indeed to suspect that such a project would settle the question of the comparative and absolute effectiveness of the SCP model, such an undertaking would be a first step and would undoubtedly provide for valuable new insights and suggest directions for future development.

EXHIBITS

EXHIBIT A

STUDENT CONSULTANT PROJECT

Graduate School of Business
University of Pittsburgh

APPLICATION FORM
(Completed by Student Officer Evaluating Client)

Firm Name _____

Address _____

Date _____ Telephone _____

1. Kind of business _____
2. Major problem _____
3. Type of service requested _____
4. Size of business: Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____
5. Number of employees _____
6. Growth potential? _____
7. History:
   a. started
   b. earnings (financial profile if possible)
   c. accountant (name)
   d. lawyer (name)
   e. type of organization (sole proprietorship, partnership, etc.)
8. Plant assets (approx. worth)
9. Liquid assets (approx. worth)
   a. bank
   b. type
10. Operating costs
    a. rent
    b. labor
    c. merchandise
    d. interest, etc.
11. Characteristics of Entrepreneur
    a. Experience
       (1) years
       (2) type
    b. Education
       (1) schooling
       (2) special training courses

c. Age

d. Family Responsibility

(1) marital status
(2) children

12. Characteristics of labor employed

a. number of
b. union, non-union
c. how obtained
d. training program
e. average age of

13. Techniques used to market goods/service

a. advertising

(1) on premises
(2) newspaper, magazine
(3) radio, television

b. dollar volume of advertising
c. personal contact?
d. telephone soliciting
e. mail

14. Distribution of Entrepreneur's time

a. in office (%)
b. in field (%)
c. soliciting(%)

15. Credit Information

a. needs presently
b. methods of obtaining
c. present a/c payable to financial organizations
d. difficulties encountered

(1) racial
(2) bad credit rating
(3) other (explain)
(4) legal judgments, liens, etc.

16. How present funds obtained?

a. own capital, friends, stock, etc.

17. Efforts made to obtain added funds

a. what bank (disposition of request)

CLIENT EXHIBIT B

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT

Student Consultant Project
Pitt Graduate School of Business

IENT_____

NTH_____ SIGNATURE_____

ring your most recent visit(s) what areas of finance, management and marketing
e discussed with your client.

their order of importance, what recommendations were made to the client?
t previous recommendations have been accepted by the client, and what major
rovements do you notice?

e there any specific interpersonal or technical problems you are having
th your client?

PROJECT EXHIBIT B

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT

Student Consultant Project
Pitt Graduate School of Business

ROJECT_____

ONTH_____ SIGNATURE_____

id your project group hold any meetings in this period? If so, concerning what?

id you do any work of a clerical nature? (minutes of meetings, progress reports, ewsletter articles, letters, etc.)

e there any problems of a technical or academic nature with which you or ur group needs help?

e there any aspects of your project which you would like to share with all P members, i.e. the rap session?

EXHIBIT C

STUDENT CONSULTANT PROJECT

Consultant Application

Name: Section: Dates:

Phone:

Address:(Home or College)

Education (college level)

Work experience:

Military experience:

Relevant memberships and/ or activities:

Particular consulting interest or work expertise (please indicate which):

Would you like to be a section manager? YES_____ NO _____

What(are, is) your primary reason(s) for wanting to join SCP?

Additional remarks:

Signed_____ Date _____

EXHIBIT D

STUDENT CONSULTANT PROJECT

Checklist to Determine Client Problem Areas
And Assign Priority Ratings

Management Function	Good	Adequate	Weak	N.A.	Priority 1	2	3	N.A.
Administration								
Organization								
Long Range Plan								
Current Year Plan								
Direction								
Coordination								
Control								
Accounting								
Organization								
Records								
Reports								
Planning and control								
Credit and Collection								
Organization								
Policies								
Collection								
Planning and control								
Finance								
Organization								
Working capital								
Equity capital								
Banking								
Cash forecasting								
Life insurance								
Fire and casualty insurance								
Planning and control								

Management Function	Good	Adequate	Weak	N.A.	Priority 1	2	3	N.A.
Personnel								
Organization								
Placement								
Training								
Compensation								
Employee relations								
Planning and control								
Bonding								
Sales								
Organization								
Distribution								
Pricing								
Controls								
Advertising								
Promotion								
Planning and Control								
Production								
Organization								
Plant Equipment								
Layout								
Materials handling								
Scheduling								
Supervision								
Inventory control								
Purchasing								
Cost Accounting								
Planning and control								

Management Function	Good	Adequate	Weak	N.A.	Priority 1	2	3	N.A.
Product Development								
Organization								
Research and development								
Engineering								
New products								
Customer Service								
Planning and control								
Taxes								
Organization (Federal Income)								
Corporate planning								
Family tax planning								
Compensation after taxes								
Property Taxes								
Federal salary taxes								
State sales taxes								
All other taxes								

Other (specify)